

**SPEECH OF PRESIDENT METSOLA. PLENARY SESSION  
VISIT OF H.E. THE PRESIDENT OF COLOMBIA, MR IVAN DUQUE MÁRQUEZ**

Strasbourg, 15 February 2022

We have with us today, the President of the Republic of Colombia, Iván Duque Márquez.

Dear President, thank you very much for coming to the European Parliament.

Muchas gracias Presidente, bienvenido.

Last year we commemorated five years since the Colombian peace agreement, a long-awaited accord that this Parliament strongly supports. I would like to thank you, Mr President, for the commitment of your administration to preserving peace.

I would also like to use this moment to honour the memory of the victims of decades of conflict. We will never forget them. Their memory must be preserved in dignity and justice, while we support all the families that suffered atrocities.

The people of Colombia have always struggled to defend and preserve their democratic institutions and the rule of law, in order to guarantee the fundamental rights of citizens.

They have done so despite the threat of antidemocratic forces and criminal organisations.

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During the Covid-19 pandemic, Colombia has led by example by granting temporary protection status to 1.8 million Venezuelans, allowing them to access key services, while one of the biggest humanitarian crisis of our time was unfolding. This historic act deserves recognition.

Yesterday's signature of the 'Joint Declaration for a Dialogue on Environment, Climate Action and Sustainable Development' is testimony to your commitment to preserving the environment and to combatting the climate crisis. In terms of biodiversity, Colombia is a world leader, so this Joint Declaration is fundamental to achieving our common global climate objectives.

I know that we will keep working together in key areas as we continue to strengthen the links between the European Union and Colombia for the benefit of all our people.

Without further delay, I give the floor to the President of Colombia, Ivan Duque Márquez. Mr President, the floor is yours.